

**HR ANNUAL REVIEW**  
**Focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

**COVER TO BE UPDATED IN DESIGN AND ADDED TO  
THE WORD DOC INTO FINAL PDF**

Draft 2

# Message from Monica Fogarty

## Warwickshire County Council, Chief Executive



Inclusion is at the heart of Warwickshire County Council, we want everyone to feel, valued, included, psychologically safe, supported and welcomed as this will help ensure our County is the best it can be, for everyone.

As reflected in the 2021 census, our County is becoming increasingly more diverse. To best serve and understand our communities, it is important that our workforce also reflects our community demographic. We want to ensure we attract a diverse workforce, and create an environment where people feel like they belong, both within their team and within the wider organisation. A diverse workforce enables us to be high performing, harnessing creativity and innovation for the benefit of our communities.

Our gender and ethnicity pay gaps, which measure average pay across different characteristics have largely remained the same and we have seen an increase in disclosure rates among many of our demographic categories, suggesting a greater willingness of our people to be open with us.

This year we have made great strides in showing our commitment to equal opportunities for people with a disability. Alongside our Silver accreditation from Inclusive Employers, we have achieved our level two Disability Confident Employer rating and have a membership to the Hidden Disability Sunflower scheme to ensure that those who have invisible disabilities have access to the support they require to be their best at work. We have started work on a Workforce Social Mobility Plan to ensure we are recruiting a diverse talent pool and enabling people from all communities both to 'get in' and 'get on' at the County Council.

This report details the excellent progress we have made across the organisation, showcasing that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is becoming more embedded into the way we work.

Our vision continues to be achieved through multiple enablers, and our actions to date are helping us to be an inclusive organisation. However, we acknowledge that there is still more that we can do. This report outlines our commitments, what's been achieved so far and an analysis of key EDI data which informs the actions that we will take to improve, and our key priorities for the next 12 months.

## At a glance

- Our mean **gender** pay gap as of 31 March 2024 is **0.4%** and our median gender pay gap is **2.5%**. Both these pay gaps are unchanged from last year and our position remains favourable compared to national and public sector benchmarks.
- Our mean **ethnicity** pay gap as of 31 March 2024 is **-4.8%**, compared with **-0.2%** in 2023. This means that, on average, colleagues from ethnic minority groups earn more than their White British/Not Stated counterparts. Our median ethnicity pay gap as of 31 March 2024 is 0.0%, which is unchanged from last year.
- Our **disability** pay gap as of 31 March 2024 is **5.2%**, a decrease of 0.2 percentage points from 2023. Our median disability pay gap is **7.6%**, a decrease of 0.4 percentage points from 2023. Whilst we are pleased that our disability pay gap is beginning to narrow, it is still outside our tolerance of +/- 5%. Therefore, disability inclusion will remain a key priority for us in 2024/2025.
- Our **pay gap analysis** is directly influenced by the rate at which employees disclose their demographic information. A higher disclosure rate will lead to more precise pay gap figures.
- This year, we have seen an **increase** in disclosure rates for sexual orientation and a stabilisation for disability. However, there has been a **decrease** in people sharing their religion, trans status, socio-economic background and whether or not they have caring responsibilities. We will continue our data confidence work, in particular encouraging disclosure of socio-economic background as part of our work on Creating Opportunities.
- Our **'Your Say' engagement survey** resulted in an agreement score of **78%** for people stating that they feel safe to be their authentic self at work. However, there was a lower agreement score for this statement amongst colleagues who declared that they had an impairment, health condition or learning difference and those who declared that they are a carer. We will continue to engage with our people via our networks and staff forums, using a consultative and collaborative approach.
- The achievements section of this report outlines the **proactive EDI activity** that has taken place in the last year, such as the launch our Approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and increasing the profile of our Neurodiversity Staff Network.
- Our Priorities for 2024/2025 will focus on:
  - **EDI being everyone's business at the County Council**
  - **Disability inclusion**
  - **Social Mobility**
  - **Employee Networks**
  - **Neurodiversity inclusion**

# Our People Strategy alignment



Through the later end of 2020, the council refreshed the 'Our People Strategy', to drive through the vision of Warwickshire County Council, a great place to work where diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best.

**Our behaviours**

Our behaviours were first introduced in 2016 and these haven't changed. Our behaviours frame how we should behave at work. They help us to understand how we should go about our work and the way we should interact with each other and our customers.

- do what we say.
- move with purpose and energy.
- focus on solutions.
- help people and communities to find their own solutions.
- build strong working relationships.
- be the best we can be.

To support us to achieve this vision, five key organisational values have been identified:



High performing



Collaborative



Customer focused

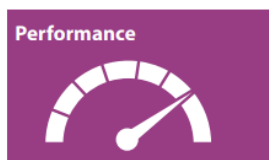


Accountable



Trustworthy

Embodying our values and behaviours, Our People Strategy is built on 6 building blocks:



For each building block we have a clear set of outcomes we need to achieve so that we can fulfill our vision and transform as an organisation in a way which is sustainable.

## Looking back: Our Priorities for 2023/4

- Launch our approach to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion which confirms our commitment and expectations in terms of EDI alongside our EDI Vision.
- Link to the Council's priorities on Creating Opportunities by increasing social mobility, tackling inequalities, creating sustainable futures and building community power.
- Consider the Inclusive Employer's Silver Award Feedback and progress with the recommendations.
- Review the ONS census data from 2021 and examine how representative our workforce is to the demographics of the county? and develop actions to address any under representation.
- Develop our progression opportunities for diverse talent by launching the Breaking Through Programme.
- Continue to work with recruitment colleagues in terms of inclusive employment and onboarding approaches.
- Promote and continue to develop our staff networks, with a particular focus on promoting our calendar of events relevant to our people.
- Raise the profile of neurodiversity awareness and acceptance within the workplace
- Address the increase in our disability pay gap and improve inclusion for colleagues with disabilities.

## Measuring success

I feel safe to  
be my  
authentic self  
at work.

78% (-1)

I feel able to  
speak up and  
challenge.

69% (=)

I understand how  
my diversity data  
adds value

61% (-7)

I feel comfortable  
talking about my  
background and  
identity with  
colleagues

80% (=)

I am able to access  
promotion and  
development  
opportunities no  
matter my identity

66% (+1)

I feel included  
within my team

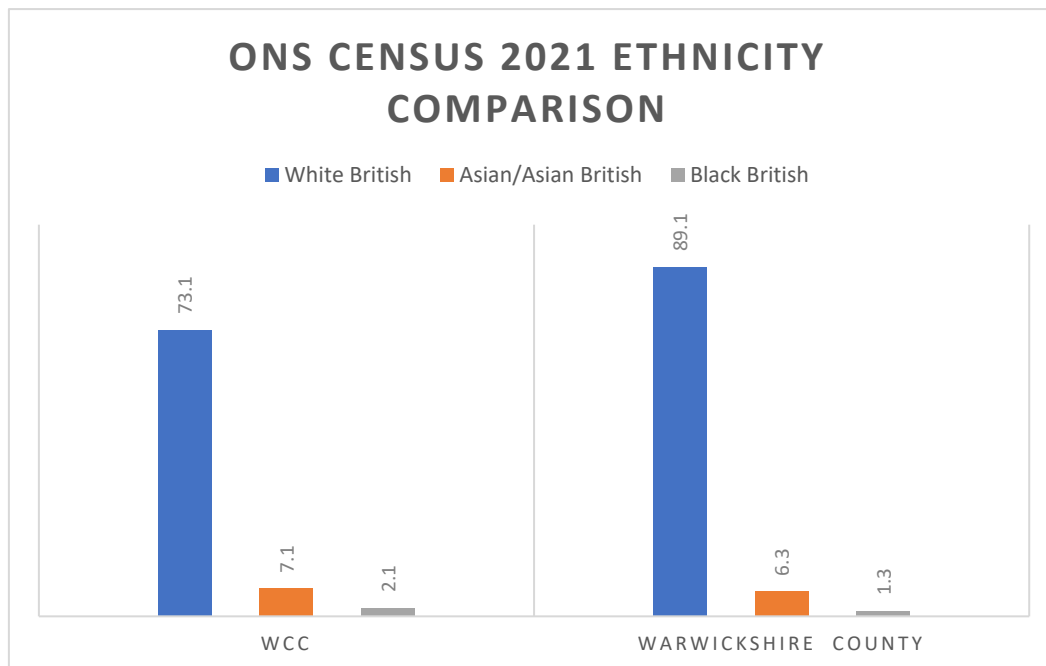
86%

(+3)

# Achievements

- We saw an increase in the majority of our **key performance indicators** which shows the progress we continue to make. There was a one percentage point reduction in *'feeling safe to be my authentic self'* but this remains high at **78%**. An area for development is our people's understanding of how diversity data is used to add value as this score decreased by 7 percentage points to **61%**. Our overall engagement survey this year resulted in an increased response rate so we are hearing the sentiment of more of our people and we will address the area of decline via targeted interventions in 2024/25.
- We officially launched our [Approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#). The Approach clearly sets out the expectations of our leaders and managers and our Legal Duty to be compliant with the Equality Act 2010. It also acknowledges how as a County Council we greatly benefit from a diverse workforce whilst reinforcing our commitment to ensuring our customers are treated with respect and dignity, ensuring our people's voices are heard and they have fair access to development opportunities.
- We have launched updated **social mobility** questions on Your HR – our HR information system, in line with the recommendations from the Social Mobility Foundation to enable us to have a clear baseline to then inform a targeted work programme in this area. We have developed a Workforce Social Mobility Action Plan which covers actions to review and scope how we increase social mobility across our workforce but also links to the wider County Council priority on ensuring we support and provide opportunities to individuals who are often disadvantaged or excluded from the labour market.
- Equipping our managers and leaders to **lead from the front on diversity** was a priority recommendation from our Inclusive Employers Assessment. One of the steps we have taken to improve this is by having EDI related themes added to Senior Leadership Team meeting agendas where themes and knowledge can be explored and local actions agreed. We have collaborated with Senior Managers to ensure EDI messages are consistently delivered in Council wide broadcasts, to increase understanding and awareness. We have also made Neurodiversity training available to all managers. We have launched a new core leadership programme for all leaders within which leading inclusively is a key theme.

- Between the last two **censuses** (held in 2011 and 2021), the population of Warwick District increased by 7.8%, from just over 137,600 in 2011 to around 148,500 in 2021. In 2021, 9.7% of Warwick residents identified their ethnic group within the "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh" category, up from 7.2% in 2011. The 2.5 percentage-point change was the largest increase among high-level ethnic groups in this area. In 2021, 84.6% of people in Warwick identified their ethnic group within the "White" category (compared with 89.2% in 2011), while 3.0% identified their ethnic group within the "Mixed or Multiple" category (compared with 2.0% the previous decade).
- In 2021 across the 4 remaining districts/boroughs residents identified their ethnic groups as the following.
- 95.5% of people in **Stratford-on-Avon** identified their ethnic group within the "White" category (compared with 97.4% in 2011), while 1.7% identified their ethnic group within the "Mixed or Multiple" category (compared with 1.0% the previous decade). The percentage of people who identified their ethnic group within the "Other" category ("Arab" or "Any other ethnic group") increased from 0.2% in 2011 to 0.5% in 2021.
- 87.1% of people in **Nuneaton and Bedworth** identified their ethnic group within the "White" category (compared with 91.3% in 2011), while 1.8% identified their ethnic group within the "Mixed or Multiple" category (compared with 1.1% the previous decade) The percentage of people who identified their ethnic group within the "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African" category increased from 0.8% in 2011 to 1.8% in 2021.
- 85.7% of people in **Rugby identified** their ethnic group within the "White" category (compared with 90.5% in 2011), while 2.8% identified their ethnic group within the "Mixed or Multiple" category (compared with 2.0% the previous decade). The percentage of people who identified their ethnic group within the "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African" category increased from 2.0% in 2011 to 2.7% in 2021.
- 96.1% of people in **North Warwickshire** identified their ethnic group within the "White" category (compared with 97.9% in 2011), while 1.3% identified their ethnic group within the "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh" category (compared with 0.9% the previous decade). The percentage of people who identified their ethnic group within the "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African" category increased from 0.3% in 2011 to 0.6% in 2021.



- There are many factors that may be contributing to the changing ethnic composition of Warwickshire such as differing patterns of ageing, fertility, mortality, and migration. Changes may also be caused by differences in the way individuals chose to self-identify between censuses. However, our workforce broadly reflects the diversity of the county we will continue to monitor this and address any underrepresentation that may arise through targeted intervention.
- In order to support diverse talent, we had sourced places on a targeted programme called 'Breaking Through' but the uptake for this programme regionally was low so the programme could not run. We are re-evaluating our approach and plan to offer an alternative programme this year and increase our marketing efforts to promote attendance.
- We are in the early stages of reviewing the current **recruitment and onboarding processes** from an inclusion perspective and are exploring several actions to improve our recruitment and onboarding processes. An action plan is being developed to progress this work.
- Our Staff Networks previously expressed to us that they felt their voices were not always being heard, particularly in matters that impacted them and their individual protected characteristic. We have taken this very helpful feedback on board, engaging more proactively to hear feedback from our staff networks. We have thus **prioritised the support and development of the networks** by embedding the way we engage with them, having a renewed focus on understanding their unique needs, then



applying this in how we can support them more as an organisation. Some of the steps we have taken are:

- Senior leaders regularly meet with the networks
  - Our network chairs and co-chairs have received training to help them develop their networks
  - We launched two new staff networks which gives us a total of 12
  - We have created new guidance on how to set up a new network
  - Network chairs have been invited to Directorate broadcasts to speak about their experiences.
  - With the support of our Marketing and Communications teams the networks are now all having new logos to give them a brand and identity.
- We have continued to progress the work we started last year by expanding our **learning and development** offer. We have included disability awareness and deaf awareness training to our training portfolio.
  - Enabling our managers to support their teams has also been a focus and to aid them we have updated our **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)** to ensure the health and safety of our employees with a disability or impairment is a priority.
  - Our employees with lived experience of neurodiversity have spoken to us and shared their thoughts on how we can better enable them to engage with the organisation. We have listened to their feedback and devised a **Neurodiversity Action Plan**. We have added a new set of specific questions on Neurodiversity to Your HR portal that has a specific focus on the different types of neurodiversity.

We recognise that we are in the very early stages of improving **disability inclusion** in WCC. The EDI team are committed to delivering positive change. The steps that we have implemented so far have been widely received positively.

- Our [EDI in Action Brochure](#) details our targeted activities and campaigns in more detail.

## Leading with Data

- We utilise our data to give us an increased awareness and an accurate understanding of the issues we are responding to. This **evidence-based approach** ensures that EDI remains a core business priority.
- As part of this year's **diversity pay gap report**, we have disaggregated our data to compare the status of all WCC colleagues with Senior Leadership and with Tier 4A Managers. This will allow us to better understand if our management and leadership teams are representative of the workforce and identify potential areas of barrier to progression which will be explored in 2024/25.
- Analysing our pay gaps allows us to identify priority areas for action and we must report our Gender Pay Gap to central government. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, our mean **disability pay gap** remains our largest pay gap at **5.2%**. Although our pay gap is below the national average, and we have seen a slight decrease from 2023, it remains outside our tolerance of +/- 5%. Our mean **gender pay gap** is **0.4%** and our median gender pay gap is **2.5%**. Both these pay gaps are unchanged from last year and our position remains favourable compared to national and public sector benchmarks. Our mean **ethnicity pay gap** is **-4.8%**, compared with **-0.2%** in 2023. This means that, on average, colleagues from ethnic minority groups earn more than their White British/Not Stated counterparts. Our median ethnicity pay gap is 0.0%, which is unchanged from last year. The detailed data is shared in the attached [Gender Pay Gap & Equality & Diversity 2023-24 Report](#).
- Analysis of **workforce turnover** indicates that the biggest gap between the percentage of starters and leavers is for colleagues who have declared that they have a disability. As of 31 March 2024, 9.9% of starters and 12.9% of leavers stated they had a declared disability.
- In 2023/24, we have seen an increase in **disclosure rates** for sexual orientation and a stabilisation for disability. However, there has been a decrease in people sharing their religion, trans status, socio-economic background and whether or not they have caring responsibilities. When asking our people for their diversity data, we give them the option of 'prefer not to say'. The category of religion and belief sees the highest proportion of employees selecting 'prefer not to say'. Socio-economic status is a newly refreshed question set so it is not surprising this has the lowest level of completion.

- In our Your Say (staff engagement) Survey 61% of respondents understood *'how their diversity data adds value'* which was a 7 percentage point drop on last year. To that end and to encourage completion, we are currently running a **data confidence campaign** to raise awareness to help people understand why we collect their data and how we use it. We will then continue this throughout the year so not to lose momentum.
- As part of Your Say, respondents' **diversity data** is collated and analysed. As with previous years' results, for the majority of statements, agreement scores were lower for respondents who selected 'prefer not to say' or who did not answer the optional demographic questions, so it is difficult to establish any causality. People who declared that they have a disability or long-term health condition and people who declared that they are a carer had a lower agreement score for 'feeling safe to be their authentic self at work' which is a cause for concern and informs our priorities for 2024/25.

# Looking Forward

## Priorities for 2024/25

We have set our priorities for 2024/25 using an evidence based approach, triangulating qualitative and quantitative data on employee experience together with Workforce Metrics. In order to create a bigger impact we have consolidated our focus for 2024/25 on the following priorities:

- Ensuring EDI is seen as everyone's business
- Improving inclusion to be disability confident including neurodiversity
- Improving social mobility across our workforce and supporting increasing social mobility in our communities.
- Continuing to listen, hear and act on the voices and sentiments of our employee networks and supporting our networks to thrive.

## Key Measures and targets for 2024/2025

- Scores of over 70% in all our Your Say EDI Measures.
- A reduction in our Disability Pay Gap to within tolerance.
- Our Gender and ethnicity pay gap remaining within tolerance.
- Increased recruitment and retention of people with a disability or impairment
- Increased levels of data disclosure.
- Positive feedback from our employee networks on our inclusion activities and progress.

## Conclusion

Overall, we have made great progress towards our EDI vision during 2023/24. From the progression and development of the staff networks to leading with our data, there have been positive steps forward towards becoming a more inclusive employer. We recognise that much more can be done, and that we must continually evolve to ensure that everyone feels valued, included, psychologically safe, supported, and welcome at Warwickshire County Council.

We are committed to ensuring our EDI activity is evidence based, through analysis of our key workforce data and most importantly through listening to our employee voice. EDI is everyone's business, and it is important that we work collaboratively across Directorates to ensure we are working cohesively on the things that matter and will have the biggest impact on an inclusive employee experience and achievement of our overall EDI vision.